

Please join me in celebrating the Great American Smokeout, and in commending those who make the commitment to quit smoking today.

PROVIDING THAT THE GREAT HALL OF THE CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER SHALL BE KNOWN AS EMANCIPATION HALL

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3315, a measure to designate the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center as "Emancipation Hall." I commend my friend, Representative ZACH WAMP for introducing this legislation. I am extremely proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation and commend my 226 other colleagues who share that pride as cosponsors.

I think the Akan principle of Sankofa symbolized by a bird with its head turned backwards taking an egg off its back, most appropriately demonstrates the importance of this legislation. This symbol demonstrates the old saying, "You cannot know where you are going, without knowing where you have been." The story of the United States Capitol exemplifies the importance of this principle in its many historically decorated corridors and monuments. However, the role of enslaved labor in the creation of the Capitol is most notably absent.

I strongly believe that the true history of our Capitol should be recognized so it is not forgotten or misinterpreted. Our Nation is so great because of the rich diversity of cultural narratives, including the experiences of my enslaved ancestors. Neglecting to acknowledge these facts when such an appropriate opportunity has presented itself, would mean forgetting the immense sacrifices of all who have contributed to building our nation. Emancipation Hall is the most appropriate title for the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center to honor that sacrifice in perpetuity.

Mr. Speaker, I am moved that the imminent passage of this legislation will guarantee that the true story of the construction of our Capitol will greet generations of visitors to come. Emancipation Hall will formally recognize a legacy struggle by African Americans and the resulting freedom that affords me the opportunity to serve in this Congress. I urge my colleagues to stand with me to support this legislation.

CONGRATULATING ALEXANDER HAMILTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Alexander Hamilton Elementary School on receiving the 2007 Outstanding School Partnership Award.

Third, fourth, and eighth grade students of Alexander Hamilton were ranked in the top 5

out of 40 schools in their area in several categories. The students that were at or above national norms were as follows: third grade reading—91.7 percent, fourth grade science—87.5 percent, eighth grade math—93.3 percent, and eighth grade composite—93.3 percent. The overall combined composite score for third through eighth grades indicated that 80.3 percent of students were at or above national norms.

In recognition of these achievements, Chicago Public School's CEO Arne Duncan and Mayor Richard Daley presented Principal Dr. Mila Strasburg with the 2007 Outstanding School Partnership Award.

Alexander Hamilton Elementary School has a long history of excellence in academic achievement. It has been an Illinois State Board of Education "Spotlight School" for several years, a Chicago Public School "School of Distinction", and has been recognized by the "Designs for Change" for fifteen consecutive years for high student achievement.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Alexander Hamilton Elementary School on receiving the 2007 Outstanding School Partnership Award and for setting a shining example for our Nation's public schools.

HONORING THE KITTRELL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, today I rise to honor the members of the Kittrell Volunteer Fire Department for their selfless dedication and bravery in protecting our families, day and night.

The Kittrell Volunteer Fire Department was established in October 1990. In their first year of service, the group responded to nearly 70 calls. Today, the Fire Department has 21 volunteers on its roster and answers between 150 and 175 calls per year.

Without volunteer fire halls, like Kittrell, many places in the Sixth District would lack effective fire protection. In the state of Tennessee, over 70 percent of fire service is provided by volunteers. Among these volunteers, almost 75 percent work other daily jobs.

Ensuring our families' safety is not without risk. Sadly, an average of two firefighters die each year in Tennessee in the line of duty. In 2007, the Tennessee Fire Services and Code Academy dedicated a memorial on their main campus in Bell Buckle to honor those Tennessee firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

For their willingness to serve, the following members of the Kittrell Volunteer Fire Department deserve recognition: Members: Asst. Chief Tracey Curray, Asst. Chief Joe Barrett, Capt. Bobby Brewer, Capt. James Paul, Lt. Tim Curray, Lt. Alison Mitchell, Chris Kirksey, Dewayne Hayes, Alvin Brandon, Adam Long, Addison Bond, Charles Saylor, John Lugo, Jr., John Wiseman, Brad Lynn and Stephanie Taylor; Members who also serve on Board of Directors: Fire Chief George Curray, Laughlin Youree, John Donnell, Bud Mitchell and Matt Lane; Board of Directors: Glenn Mitchell, Faye Curray, Robert Adams, Joseph Peay and Jim Puckett.

RECOGNITION OF EIGHTH ANNUAL NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

HON. W. TODD AKIN

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 15, 2007

Mr. AKIN. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the eighth annual National Adoption Day.

On November 17, 2007, a record number of courts across the country will open their doors to finalize the adoptions of thousands of children from foster care. Every child deserves a permanent and loving family and today there are 114,000 children in foster care who are still in need of adoptive homes.

I laud the goals of National Adoption Day 2007 which include:

Finalizing adoptions from foster care in all 50 States; celebrating and honoring all families who adopt; raising awareness about the 114,000 children currently in foster care waiting for adoption; encouraging others to adopt children from foster care; building collaboration among local adoption agencies, courts, and advocacy organizations.

I applaud the efforts of the hundreds of volunteer lawyers, foster care professionals, child advocates and local judges who will come together to celebrate adoptions. I hope the goals of National Adoption Day are met and far exceeded.

THE NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE DAY ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 13, 2007

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.J. Res. 62, the Native American Heritage Day Act of 2007. I commend my colleague Representative BACA for introducing this resolution and am honored to be an original cosponsor of the legislation. This is a much needed resolution that recognizes the vital contributions of Native Americans to the history of our Nation.

I only need to acknowledge my own heritage to know that the steps to build the bridge of understanding and diplomacy with the Native Americans and other minorities have been inadequate in this country. This legislation proves that we live in a nation that is great for being able to reflect accurately and recognize the history of its own oppressed people.

This bill considers the Friday after Thanksgiving as the appropriate day for the Native American Heritage Day. The timing for this day could not be more appropriate than during a weekend of celebration and giving thanks. It is only right that the original inhabitants of our nation be duly recognized in conjunction with this important celebration.

Mr. Speaker, a specific day of recognition will allow future generations to appropriately recognize and admire Native Americans for their important contributions to all aspects of the American life. For too long, this assistance in the development of our nation has been overlooked.

This day of heritage does not only exhibit proper respect for the indigenous people of